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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
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AV Files

January 24, 1962

AV - C. P. VPA

Inquiry by Congressman Chamberlain's Office Regarding Status of Investigation of Sabena 707 Aircraft Accident at Brussels on Feb. 15, 1961.

Tel Code 180 - 4872

Mrs. Ruth Corlett of Congressman Chamberlain's office called Mr. Beaudry of WE for info on progress of subject aircraft accident investigation. He asked me to call her in reply. After informing Mr. Winnet of H, who had no objection to my calling Mrs. Corlett, I informed her that the investigation was still in progress and that no report or statements had as yet been made by the Belgian Investigation Commission. Adding to the information State had already provided in its letter to the Congressman dated August 23, 1961 (see file), I told her that the tests the U.S. had agreed to perform on some pieces of the aircraft equipment recovered after the accident had been concluded recently and a report would be prepared by the CAB within 2 weeks and sent via State and our Embassy at Brussels to the Belgian Investigation Commission. In reply to her question whether the CAB report on the testing would be made available to interested parties in the U.S., I informed her that this would not be done since the investigation was not under our jurisdiction and the testing was being done at the specific request of the Belgians. I explained that it would be highly improper for anyone except the Belgians in this case to release information bearing on the investigation. I also explained that these tests formed only a small part of the overall investigation and indicated that the result of the tests, as I understood from the CAB, would not indicate the direct probable cause of the accident.

Tel Cert. 4286

In reply to Mrs. Corlett's question of what happens next and when will a report be issued by the Belgians, I replied that it was customary for the investigating authority to conduct a public hearing after all phases of the technical investigation was completed, and then issue a final report if no further investigation is necessary. I added that it was customary for a final report to be issued and we would receive a copy unless the Belgian Government decided not to release the findings. I said that the Department would try to obtain enough copies of the final report, if and when released, to distribute to all interested parties that have corresponded with us on this disaster. Otherwise, we would make some arrangement so that those with a real interest could obtain a copy of the final report.

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In closing I informed her that it was virtually impossible, at this time, to determine when the report would be issued. She thanked me for the information and seemed pleased with my detailed information on the status of the investigation. I invited her to call us for any further information or explanation her office might desire.

TRG:AV:GPVarros:gb 1/25/62

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